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Ex-CIA agent: Grenada signals Nicaragua invasion

by JEFF MORGAN

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The United States invaded Grenada because the Reagan administration wanted to divert attention from incidents in Lebanon and prepare the American public for a future invasion of Nicaragua, according to former Central Intelligence Agency officer John Stockwell.

"Ronald Reagan is up front," Stockwell said in an interview Tuesday. "This guy likes controversy. It makes him look like what he thinks is a leader."

During the Vietnam War, the American public didn't approve or accept military troops in that country, Stockwell said. "There has been talk of invading Nicaragua for the last two years," he said. "All you have to do is read what [officials] have said during those two years."

Stockwell left Grenada for Trinidad only weeks before the bloody coup took place in which Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and four of his aides were shot and killed.



JOHN STOCKWELL

Stockwell knew Bishop personally.

"Trinidad is within eyesight of Grenada," he said. "I was going to go back over to Grenada but I got sick, the flu or something. I'm glad I didn't now. I would have been right in the middle of the whole thing had I returned."

STOCKWELL CRITICIZED
Reagan's move into Grenada, saying that violence there had apparently concluded with the end of the Marxist-led military coup.

The former agent, who joined the CIA in 1964 and earned the position of the Chief of the Angola Task Force in 1975, said Cubans in Grenada could have shot the Marine paratroopers while they were still in the air.

"They saw the mission coming," Stockwell said. "They didn't fire until they were attacked. They fought so vigorously that Washington kept raising its estimates of how many Cuban troops were there," Stockwell said. "They had estimated half a brigade, but when they couldn't find 1,100 troops, [the Pentagon] said there were only 750, just what Cuba had reported."

Historical research has shown that all indicators are in place for another major world confrontation, he said.